

83 The Advertiser
February 15. 15.

EXAMINATION HOWLERS.

Among the "Notes by Examiners," in the Manual of the Public Examinations Board, issued by the University of Adelaide, are found some delightful specimens of unconscious humour. Sometimes, however, there is a glimmering of wisdom in the howlers, as in the case of the Senior Commercial candidate, who was asked to define "real and nominal wages." "Real wages," remarked this economist, sagely, "are paid to men for real work — i.e., piecework — where men are paid for what they do; but in nominal wages no (the worker) gets the same as a man who does not put much energy into his work. Nominal wages are what the unionists try to get." Junior German candidates' thoughts evidently ran on the Kaiser, as, for "Grossmütze," many had the "All Mighty," "High and Mighty," and more than one "Grandmother!" In Primary Algebra one young hopeful, whose algebraical attainments were certainly not inferior to his geographical ignorance, arrived at the astonishing conclusion that 1½ miles was the distance separating ports in Europe and Australia. A junior candidate, asked to describe the Cabinet system, characterized it as "a number of men of high intellect, who meet together in secret." "The comparative truth of this statement," comments the examiner, "does not compensate for its vagueness." In explaining the terms Whig and Tory, many junior candidates contended that the Labour Party of to-day corresponds with the former Tory Party — a remark which, perhaps, displayed more political discernment than the examiners gave the candidates credit for! The war atmosphere evidently penetrates even into examination halls, for a senior candidate appended a footnote to his history paper, explaining that he was hoping to be accepted that day for the war, and therefore could not collect his thoughts. His judgment was sound; it is far more important to-day for our youths to be concerned with the making of contemporary history than to be acquiring information regarding ancient times. Senior candidates evinced a patriotic contempt for the German language—most of them "answered the questions carelessly, and wrote badly." "Candidates are again warned against submitting absurd answers," say the examiners regarding senior arithmetic and algebra. "Several stated that a cubic foot of jarrah weighs less than half a pound, one gave it as less than half an ounce. A man pumping for an hour might reasonably expect more than three gallons of water, or be surprised at getting over three-quarters of a million gallons. Such answers may be taken on trust by primary candidates, but senior candidates are expected to be more critical. Question 3 brought forth answers not merely absurd but plainly impossible. A number of candidates obtained mixtures richer than either of the components, while in one case the mixture was said to contain over 200 per cent. of lime. It is most important that students should learn to consider their answers. A large number of candidates thought about a mile and a half an hour a fair speed for a hare, yet only one made a note that his answer seemed ridiculous. Those candidates who stated that the speed of the hare was less than that of the tortoise are to be classed with those mentioned under Section . . ." The junior commercial examination produced a crop of howlers. One future Sherlock estimated the interest on £35 for 1½ days at 6 per cent. per annum at £24 10/; and another gave the interest on £2,000 for three months at 5½ per cent. per annum at £513 15/. However, "we welcome signs of mental exercise even when the result is off the track, as in the case of the candidate who set down the item 'sundry debtors' on the credit side of a trial balance, and explained his action by the following syllogism:—All gains are credit; it is a gain to have people owing you money; therefore 'sundry debtors' is a credit. . . . Question 7.—Here and there were points in the answer that yielded some relief by reason of the unconscious humour that was imported into the confusion; for instance, 'The Chancellor being aggravated (sic), the Governor made a speech . . . but he was too excited . . . and therefore I did not continue.' 'Life and death would be taken if the Germans marched through Belgium; she kept her neutrality for the honour of Great Britain!'"

The Register

February 6th 15

THE UNIVERSITY.

The University announcement which appears in our advertising columns gives particulars in regard to the date of entry for scholarship examination, and information relating to the opening of the University and Conservatorium. The time-table of the subjects to be taken in the commercial course this year is also given. The University calendar, the manual of the public examinations board, and the syllabus of music examinations for the year are now ready, and copies may be had at the University or at all booksellers' establishments.

The Register

February 20th 15

MR. PARSONS ON EDUCATION.

To the Editor.

Sir—I wonder if Mr. Thomas Ryan remembers at least one occasion when he used a very big "I?" I will remind him, it was when he had left the railway service and was a candidate for the district of Alexandra. He used words to this effect:—"I shall be at the top of the poll, and pull three of the others after me." So he was, but unfortunately for Mr. Ryan, the poll was upside down. As for the Hon. Angus Parsons, I think he can hold his own with Mr. Thomas Ryan when it comes right down to education.—I am, &c.,

LEONARD HUSSEY.

Sir—Mr. Ryan's message bearing on the educational problem is spoilt by the attack made upon the gentleman who happens to be his political opponent in the Sturt electorate. First among the qualifications which a teacher ought to possess is love. Therefore no person ought to be a teacher—or a teacher of teachers—unless he has shown in his daily life that love is the strongest quality of his nature. Only such are fit to be teachers—those who "never speak ill of anyone; refuse to listen when anyone speaks ill of another." Are you listening, Mr. Ryan? Mr. Ryan's proposals to raise the compulsory age of attendance from 13 to 14 years, and the compulsory attendance of apprentices at technical schools during working hours, concern the parents more than his opinion of his political opponents. Why not trust the parents to use their discrimination in deciding whether it is better for a boy to continue at school after reaching the age of 13 or not? Parents, as a rule, do continue the education of children who show a natural capacity for learning; but, it is as useless as it is wrong to force others to remain at school after reaching the age of 13. Mr. Ryan, if he wishes to win his spurs as an educationalist, should rely more on the "co-operation" of parents and teachers instead of advocating more "compulsion," which would entail hardships on the great majority of parents. Parents may be trusted not to allow "genius that happens to be born of lowly parentage to expend itself in lowly work." No educationist worthy of the name would teach of the superiority of one class of work over another—all work if honorably done, is of equal value to the nation.—I am, &c.,

PARENT.

Sir—Mr. Thomas Ryan appears anxious to extend the compulsory school age to 14 years. This would hit the poorer parents very hard. I have reared a large family, and though none attended school after their thirteenth birthday they will stand comparison with any others. The trouble is that young Australians are now educated to fill nice genteel billets—which many of them never find. Hundreds would be better off had they been put to some trade when they reached the age of 13. But, no; they have been taught to look for something easy, where they can gain money and power. Who will do the work when all the young men are agents, &c.? Workers support too many of that sort now, and have more than enough worries without having them added to by raising the compulsory school age to 14 years. I understand that the Education Commission refused to recommend the extension of the compulsory age above 13 for the very reason that it would press heavily on poorer parents. Surely we have enough compulsion without this addition.—I am, &c.,

WORKER'S WIFE.

The Register

February 20th 15

Professor H. Darnley Naylor, who has occupied the chair of classics at the University of Adelaide since February, 1906, will celebrate to-morrow the 43rd anniversary of his birth. Professor Naylor was born at the recently bombarded seaport of Scarborough, England, on February 21, 1872, his father being Dr. John Naylor, the famous organist of York Minster. Professor Naylor was educated at St. Peter's School, York, and Trinity College, Cambridge, where, in addition to graduating M.A., he gained first class in the classical tripos in 1894 and the Walker prize in classics. He was lecturer and tutor at Ormond College, University of Melbourne, from 1895 to 1905, and vice-master at Ormond College, University of Melbourne in the following year accepted his present post in Adelaide. He is spending the vacation in Tasmania.

The Register

February 22nd 15

MELBOURNE CONSERVATORIUM.

NEW TEACHING SYSTEM.

MELBOURNE February 21.

A meeting of the committee of the Melbourne Conservatorium was held on Saturday morning when a number of recommendations relating to future work at the Conservatorium were agreed to. In the new order of things which is to be inaugurated is included a new system of teaching which will apply to voice production, and pianoforte and violin playing. Professor Marshall Hall claims for it that it will make for perfection, and that, as far as the violin is concerned, it will be possible to do in three years what under the old method took five years. Mr. Otto Fisher Sobell, the discoverer of the method as applied to voice production, is to join the University Conservatorium teaching staff. The offer of an engagement has been cabled to him, and he has accepted the proffered position. When he will arrive in Australia is not yet known. Mr. Sobell was originally an Adelaide man, but for the last 30 years he has been in London teaching singing. "If it were not for the fact that the war has knocked the bottom out of everything musical in London we should not have got him," explained Professor Hall.